

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, December 15, 1876, with transcript

Valuable A most interesting letter by Mr. Alexander Graham Bell to Miss Mabel Hubbard, dated Dec. 15, 1876 and found by Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor at the bottom of a cabinet packed with robbish July 1923. Boston, Mass. Dec. 15th, 1876. My dear little May:

I am tired out tonight and can only send you a few lines to let you know that we have arrived safely. The train reached Boston at 6:15 in the morning, but our sleeping car was shunted off into a siding, and none of us stirred till nearly seven o'clock. Berta and Grace occupied section No. 11, and I had No. 4, just on the opposite side of the car, so as to be near them. We had a very comfortable journey, and I can answer for myself that I slept well.

We breakfasted at the Hotel , and then went down to the Boston and Maine depot in time for the 9:15 train. Oh, reaching my room a most appalling sight met my eye — a pile of letters some four or five inches high! What can I do? I cannot possibly answer them all. I have not yet had time even to read them all — and the idea of answering them is too horrible to be thought of. There were one or two letters that I pounced upon at once and devoured with great relish. One was a letter from home and the other was your epistle in three volumes containing cuttings from the Quincy Herald and from the big California tree! You must not think that you can tire me, I always find time to read and enjoy your letters, and it is no labour to me to write to you.

The school in Marquette, Mich. is going to be a success I think. The parents of several deaf children have come together and now ready for a teacher.

The Chicago school is already commenced — and Miss Mark had gone to take charge of it.

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I wish your father would alter some of the Postal arrangements for my special benefit! My letter to Miss Mark reached her through the dead 2 letter office, two or three weeks after date, because I had put on a two cent stamp instead of a three cent one. It is certainly ridiculous that a letter from Boston to Belmont should have to go to Washington on the way! I get so tired sometimes that I make mistakes in stamping the letters. I have been hard at work all day long and have had no time to go out to Cambridge yet. I shall deposit your mother's cheque in the bank tomorrow. The machine for "plaiting"- or "ruffling" or "crimping" or whatever you call it — will be rather a difficult thing to make after all. The motion required is simple enough — but I am afraid that we should need a steam engine to work it!! It will be difficult also to make it so that the material "crumpled up" — can be taken out again after it has once been put in.

I saw your uncle Eustis this morning, and delivered Gertrude's message. He is to write today. I am interested in a little girl from the Orphan Asylum — a new pupil of mine — who came for her first lesson today. The poor little thing's mouth is cleft in two. She was born so, and of course cannot speak. I told the Katrom of the Asylum that I thought I could teach her to speak — if she had an artificial palate made to fit the cleft and prevent the air from passing into the nostrils. This has been done and the little girl came for her first lesson today, and I am very hopeful of good results.

The lady "superintendent" or "directress" of the Asylum came with her, and introduced herself to me as "Mrs. Tracy". I remember meeting her at Mrs. Eustis Hubbard's. She inquired kindly after you all.

Miss Locke called upon me today with Dr. Lewis' little girl. The little deaf child I told you about. She is a sweet little thing — the child I mean — not Miss Locke.

I am ashamed of this letter and don't know whether I shall send it or not. I cannot write another tonight though, and shall go right off to bed. I hope you and Gertrude will come

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here on Monday. Poor Gertrude. She seems so pale and delicate, I feel quite troubled about her. I wish I could do something to make her strong and well.

Please excuse this letter, With ever so much love, Yours Alec. Miss Mabel Hubbard, New York.